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(54) **COATINGS FOR CUTTING TOOLS**

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See application file for complete search history.

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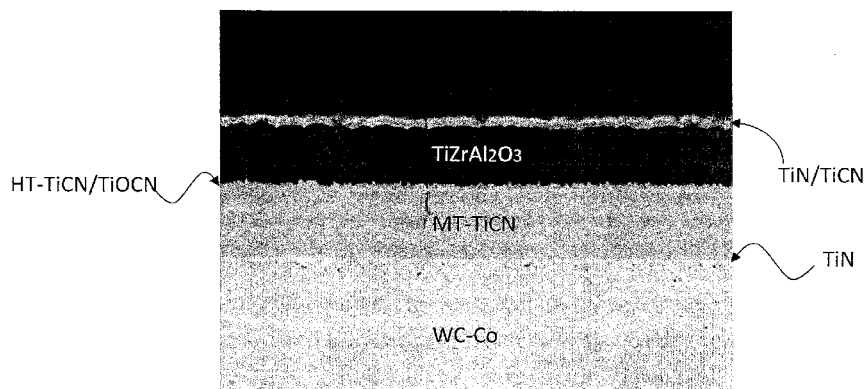
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

In one aspect, cutting tools are described having coatings
adhered thereto which, in some embodiments, can demon-
strate desirable wear resistance and increased cutting life-
times. A coated cutting tool, in some embodiments, com-
prises a substrate and a coating adhered to the substrate, the
coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$.

23 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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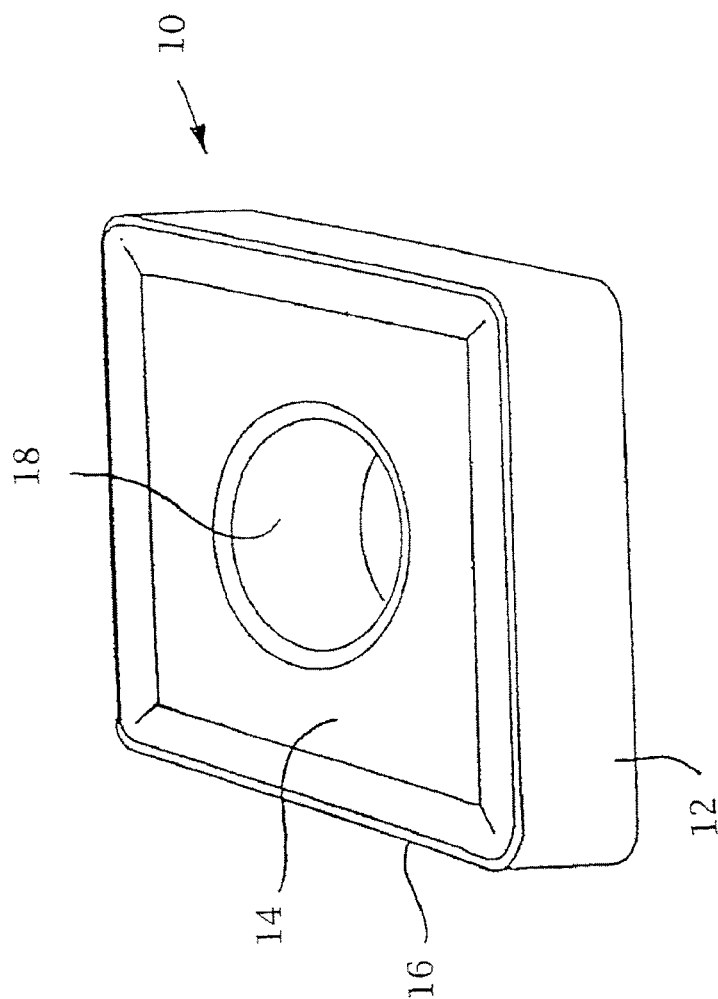


FIGURE 1

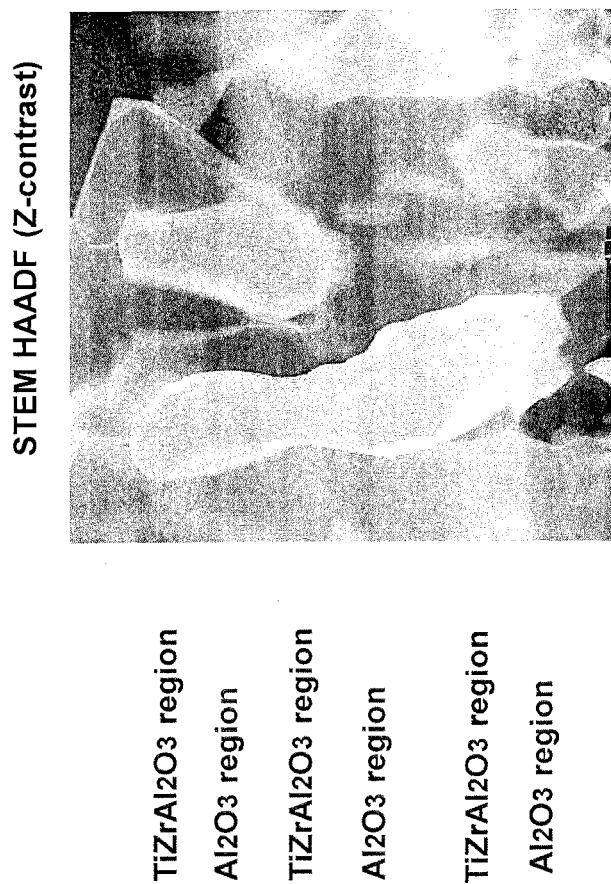
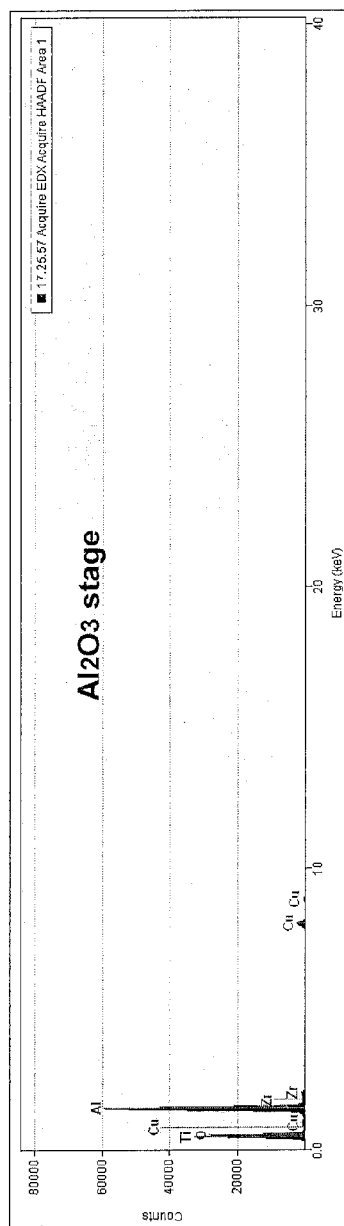


FIGURE 2

(a)



(b)

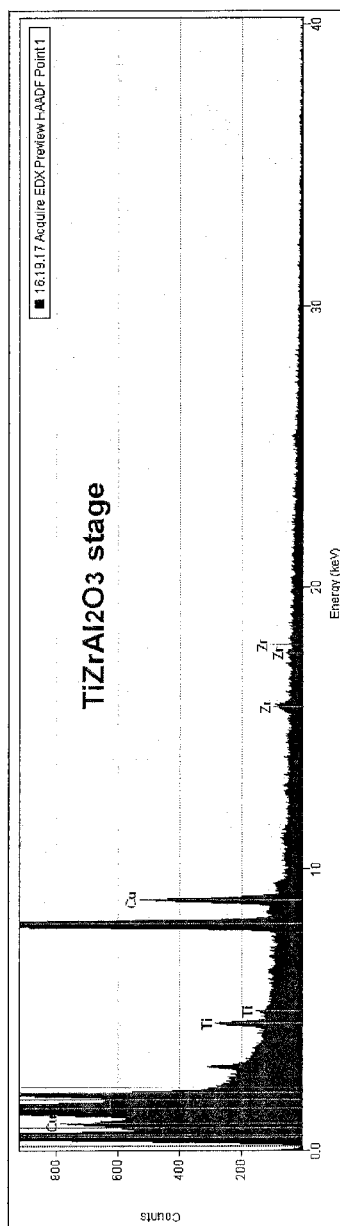


FIGURE 3

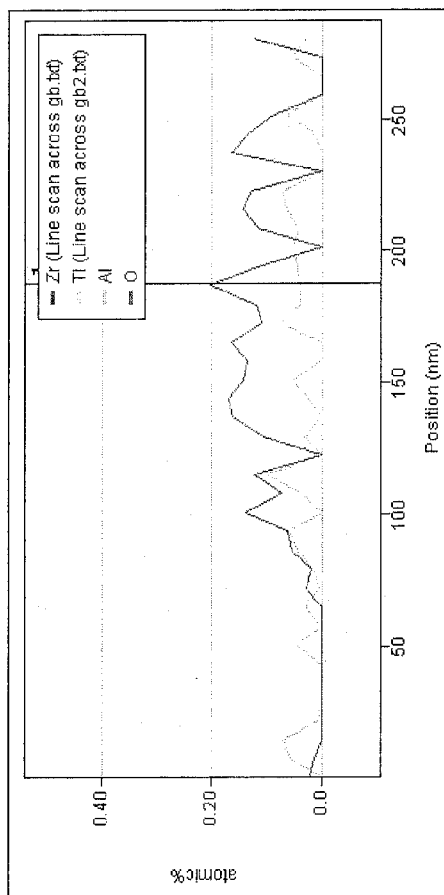
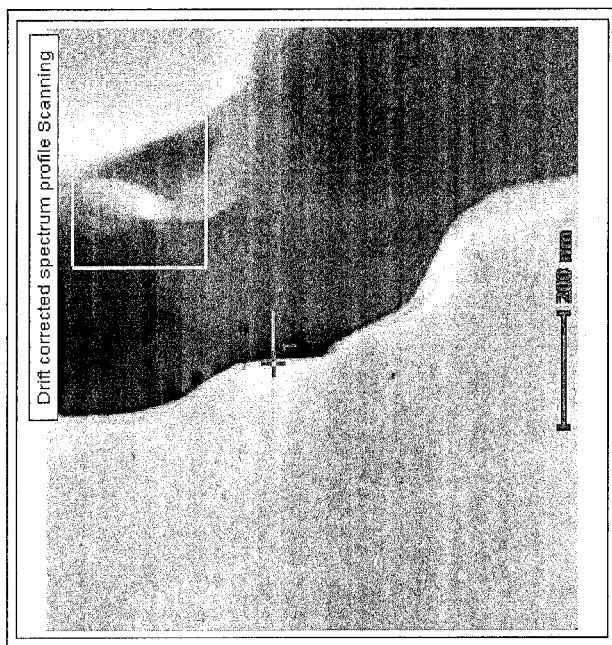


FIGURE 4

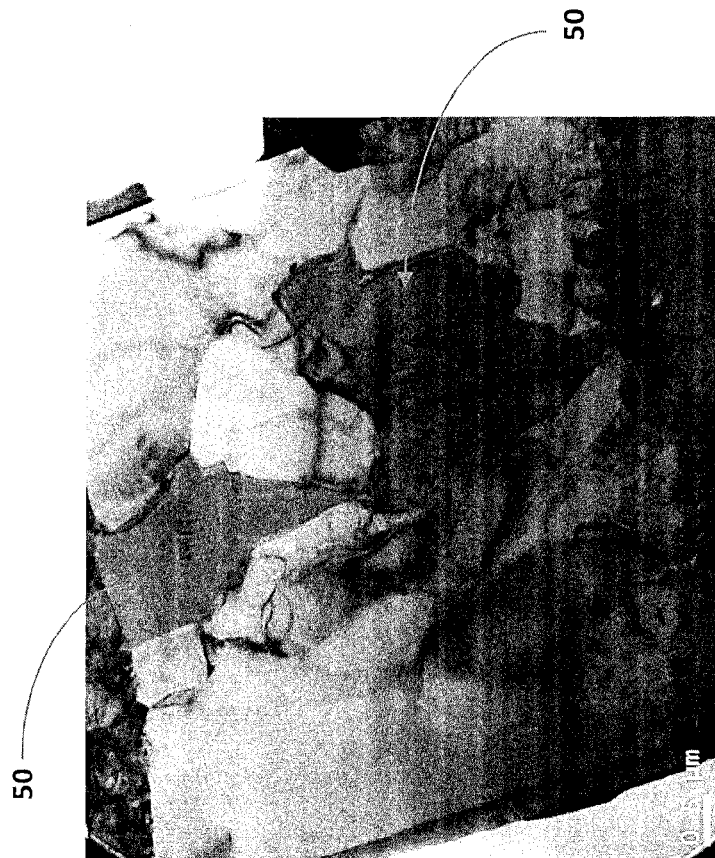


FIGURE 5

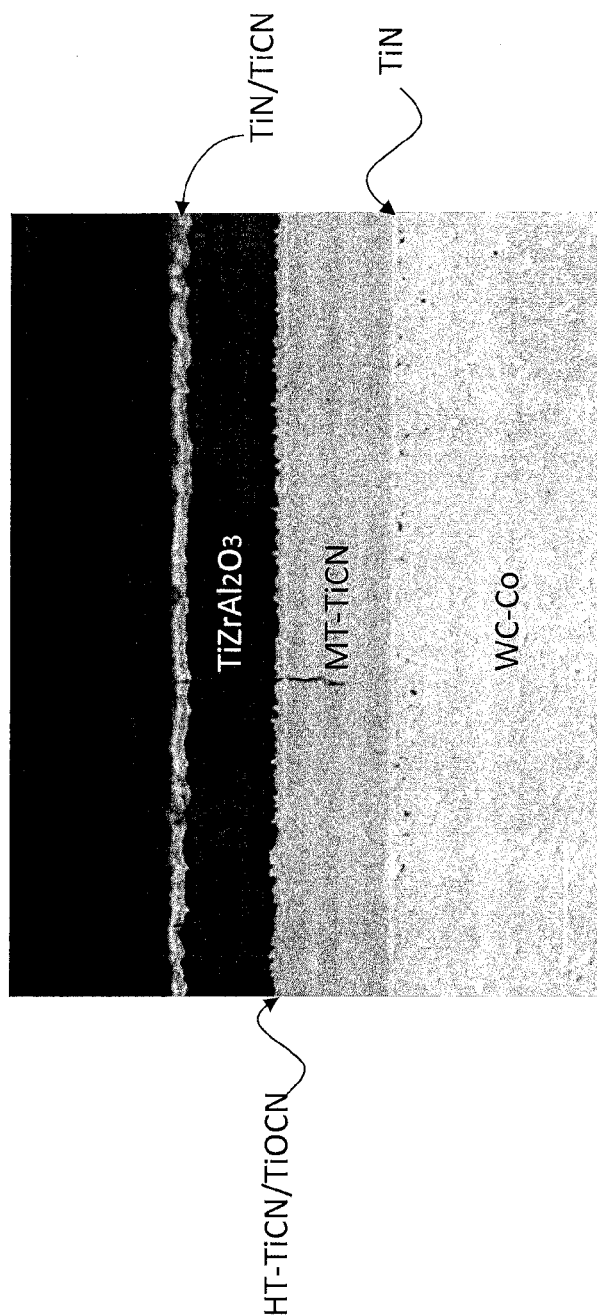


FIGURE 6

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COATINGS FOR CUTTING TOOLS

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

The present application claims priority pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/803,948 filed Mar. 21, 2013, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD

The present invention relates to coatings for cutting tools and, in particular, to coatings deposited by chemical vapor deposition (CVD).

BACKGROUND

Cutting tools, including cemented carbide cutting tools, have been used in both coated and uncoated conditions for machining various metals and alloys. In order to increase cutting tool wear resistance, performance and lifetime, one or more layers of refractory material have been applied to cutting tool surfaces. TiC, TiCN, TiN and/or Al_2O_3 , for example, have been applied to cemented carbide substrates by CVD and by physical vapor deposition (PVD). While effective in inhibiting wear and extending tool lifetime in a variety of applications, refractory coatings based on single or multi-layer constructions of the foregoing refractory materials have increasingly reached their performance limits, thereby calling for the development of new coating architectures for cutting tools.

SUMMARY

In one aspect, cutting tools are described having coatings adhered thereto which, in some embodiments, can demonstrate desirable wear resistance and increased cutting lifetimes. A coated cutting tool described herein comprises a substrate and a coating adhered to the substrate, the coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. The polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ can be deposited by CVD. Further, the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ polycrystalline layer can demonstrate various intra-layer compositional gradients. For example, the polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ can have a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 and stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. Alternatively, the polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ can have a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 . In a further embodiment, the polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ can have a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 , a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$.

Intra-layer compositional gradients are also reflected in grains of the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ polycrystalline layer. For example, an individual grain of the polycrystalline layer can display an intra-grain compositional gradient formed by presence of an Al_2O_3 stage and a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage within the grain. In another embodiment, an intra-grain compositional gradient is formed by the presence of an Al_2O_3 stage, ZrAl_2O_3 stage and TiAl_2O_3 stage within the grain. In a further embodiment, an intra-grain compositional gradient is formed by the presence of an Al_2O_3 stage, ZrAl_2O_3 stage, TiAl_2O_3 stage and $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage within the grain.

Methods of making coated cutting tools are also provided. A method of making a coated cutting tool described herein comprises providing a cutting tool substrate and depositing

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over a surface of the cutting tool substrate by chemical vapor deposition a coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. The gas mixture employed by the CVD process can comprise AlCl_3 , ZrCl_4 , TiCl_4 , H_2 and CO_2 . Further, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer deposited according to a method described herein can demonstrate an intra-layer compositional gradient described above. For example, the CVD deposited $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can have an intra-layer compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 and a stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. In another embodiment, the CVD deposited $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can display a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 . In a further embodiment, the CVD deposited $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can display a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 , a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. As described further herein, intra-layer compositional gradients can be formed by the simultaneous and/or alternate introduction of ZrCl_4 and TiCl_4 into the CVD gas mixture.

These and other embodiments are described in greater detail in the detailed description which follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a substrate of a coated cutting tool according to one embodiment described herein.

FIG. 2 is a scanning transmission electron microscopy/high angular annular dark field (STEM-HAADF) image of grains of a CVD polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer according to one embodiment described herein.

FIG. 3 is an energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) spectrum demonstrating a compositional gradient within individual grains of a CVD polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer according to one embodiment described herein.

FIG. 4 is an EDS line profile produced in conjunction with STEM analysis of a grain according to one embodiment described herein.

FIG. 5 is a TEM bright field image of grains in a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer, wherein a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ grain having an irregular shape is illustrated.

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional optical image of a coated cutting insert according to one embodiment described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Embodiments described herein can be understood more readily by reference to the following detailed description and examples and their previous and following descriptions. Elements, apparatus and methods described herein, however, are not limited to the specific embodiments presented in the detailed description and examples. It should be recognized that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles of the present invention. Numerous modifications and adaptations will be readily apparent to those of skill in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

1. Coated Cutting Tools

In one aspect, cutting tools are described having coatings adhered thereto which, in some embodiments, can demonstrate desirable wear resistance and increased cutting lifetimes. A coated cutting tool described herein comprises a substrate and a coating adhered to the substrate, the coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$.

Turning now to specific components, a coated cutting tool described herein comprises a substrate. Substrates of coated cutting tools can comprise any material not inconsistent with

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the objectives of the present invention. In some embodiments, a substrate comprises cemented carbide, carbide, ceramic, cermet or steel.

A cemented carbide substrate can comprise tungsten carbide (WC). WC can be present in a substrate in an amount of at least about 70 weight percent. In some embodiments, WC is present in a substrate in an amount of at least about 80 weight percent or in an amount of at least about 85 weight percent. Additionally, metallic binder of a cemented carbide substrate can comprise cobalt or cobalt alloy. Cobalt, for example, can be present in a cemented carbide substrate in an amount ranging from about 3 weight percent to about 15 weight percent. In some embodiments, cobalt is present in a cemented carbide substrate in an amount of 5-12 weight percent or 6-10 weight percent. Further, a cemented carbide substrate may exhibit a zone of binder enrichment beginning at and extending inwardly from the surface of the substrate.

Cemented carbide substrates can also comprise one or more additives such as, for example, one or more of the following elements and/or their compounds: titanium, niobium, vanadium, tantalum, chromium, zirconium and/or hafnium. In some embodiments, titanium, niobium, vanadium, tantalum, chromium, zirconium and/or hafnium form solid solution carbides with WC in the substrate. The substrate, in some embodiments, comprises one or more solid solution carbides in an amount ranging from about 0.1 weight percent to about 5 weight percent. Additionally, a cemented carbide substrate can comprise nitrogen.

A substrate, in other embodiments, comprises polycrystalline cubic boron nitride (PcBN). PcBN substrates can include any amount of PcBN not inconsistent with the objectives of the present invention. For example, PcBN substrates can comprise greater than 85 weight percent PcBN. In some embodiments, a cutting tool substrate described herein comprises PcBN in an amount selected from Table I.

TABLE I

Weight Percent PcBN of Cutting Tool Substrate Substrate Wt. % PcBN
≥60
≥70
>80
>85
≥90
70-95
86-97
90-97
92-95

Further, PcBN substrates of cutting tools described herein can also comprise ceramic or metallic binder. Suitable ceramic binders for PcBN substrates can comprise nitrides, carbonitrides, carbides and/or borides of titanium, tungsten, cobalt or aluminum. In some embodiments, for example, a PcBN substrate comprises a binder of AlN, AlB₂ or mixtures thereof. Moreover, in some embodiments, a binder comprises solid solutions of any of the foregoing ceramic or metallic binders.

PcBN substrates having compositional parameters described herein can be provided in various constructions. For example, a coated cutting tool can comprise a stand-alone monolithic solid piece PcBN substrate. Alternatively, a PcBN substrate is provided as a compact or insert attached to a support by brazing or other joining technique. Further, a PcBN substrate can be a full top or full top/full bottom cutting insert on a support.

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In some embodiments, a substrate of a coated cutting tool described herein comprises one or more cutting edges formed at the juncture of a rake face and flank faces of the substrate. FIG. 1 illustrates a substrate of a coated cutting tool according to one embodiment described herein. As illustrated in FIG. 1, the substrate (10) has cutting edges (12) formed at the juncture of the substrate rake face (14) and flank faces (16). The substrate also comprises an aperture (18) operable to secure the substrate (10) to a tool holder.

In some embodiments, a substrate of a coated cutting tool is an insert, drill bit, saw blade or other cutting apparatus.

A coating adhered to the substrate comprises a polycrystalline layer of TiZrAl₂O₃. Titanium and zirconium, for example, can be dopants in the polycrystalline structure. Titanium and zirconium can be present in the polycrystalline layer in any amount not inconsistent with the objectives of the present invention. In some embodiments, titanium and zirconium are present in the polycrystalline TiZrAl₂O₃ layer in amounts selected from Tables II and III.

TABLE II

Ti of Polycrystalline TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ Layer Ti Content (wt. %)
0.01-5
0.1-4
0.15-3
0.2-2

TABLE III

Zr of Polycrystalline TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ Layer Zr Content (wt. %)
0.01-5
0.1-4
0.15-3
0.2-2

In being dopants, titanium and/or zirconium can be incorporated into the lattice of an Al₂O₃ phase. In such embodiments, the titanium and/or zirconium do not form oxide phase(s) separate from the Al₂O₃ phase.

Titanium and zirconium can be generally dispersed throughout the polycrystalline layer of TiZrAl₂O₃. Alternatively, a polycrystalline layer of TiZrAl₂O₃ can demonstrate various compositional gradients described herein. For example, the TiZrAl₂O₃ polycrystalline layer can display a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al₂O₃ and a stage composed of TiZrAl₂O₃. This intra-layer compositional gradient can be established by a singular occurrence of the Al₂O₃ stage and the TiZrAl₂O₃ stage within the layer. In other embodiments, the intra-layer compositional gradient is established by multiple occurrences of the Al₂O₃ stage and the TiZrAl₂O₃ stage within the layer. In such embodiments, Al₂O₃ stages can alternate with TiZrAl₂O₃ stages throughout the polycrystalline layer.

An intra-layer gradient comprising an Al₂O₃ stage and a TiZrAl₂O₃ stage can be reflected in grains of the TiZrAl₂O₃ layer. For example, an individual grain of the polycrystalline layer can display an intra-grain compositional gradient formed by presence of the Al₂O₃ stage and the TiZrAl₂O₃ stage within the grain. In some embodiments, the Al₂O₃ stage and the TiZrAl₂O₃ stage alternate throughout individual grains.

FIG. 2 is a STEM-HAADF image of grains of a CVD polycrystalline TiZrAl₂O₃ layer according to one embodi-

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ment described herein. As illustrated in FIG. 2, grains of the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer display regions of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ alternating with regions of Al_2O_3 . The alternating regions in FIG. 2 follow the growth direction of the grains forming a striped structure attributed to contrast provided by the presence of Ti and Zr. The corresponding STEM EDS spectrum of FIG. 3 further demonstrates intra-grain compositional gradients formed by regions including Ti and Zr [FIG. 3(b)] and regions wherein Ti and Zr are absent [FIG. 3(a)].

Further, a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage of the polycrystalline layer can also display a compositional gradient formed by localization of titanium or zirconium in one or more regions of the stage. Zr, for example, can localize in regions adjacent to grain boundaries, thereby establishing a gradient with Ti within a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage. FIG. 4 is an STEM EDS line profile of the pictured $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ grain according to one embodiment described herein. As illustrated in FIG. 4, Zr localizes in the vicinity of the grain boundary whereas Ti remains relatively uniformly distributed.

Grains of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can additionally display unique geometries not found in other CVD coatings, including alumina coatings. Grains of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer, for example, can have irregular geometries in the lateral and/or vertical dimension(s). FIG. 5 is a TEM bright field image of grains in a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer, wherein a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ grain (50) having an irregular shape is illustrated. The irregular grain (50) of FIG. 5 displays two regions connected by a thinner conical region. Irregular shapes presented by $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ grains are in contrast to prior CVD coatings, including alumina coatings, demonstrating regular columnar or equiaxed geometries.

As described herein, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can display other intra-layer compositional gradient arrangements. In some embodiments, an intra-layer compositional gradient comprises a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 . Such an intra-layer compositional gradient can be reflected in individual grains of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer. For example, an individual grain can comprise an intra-grain compositional gradient formed by the presence of the Al_2O_3 stage, the ZrAl_2O_3 stage and the TiAl_2O_3 stage. Further, an intra-layer compositional gradient can comprise a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 , a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. This intra-layer compositional gradient can also be reflected in individual grains of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer.

A polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can have any thickness not inconsistent with the objectives of the present invention. In some embodiments, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer has a thickness of 1-15 μm or 2-10 μm .

Moreover, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can be deposited directly on a surface of the cutting tool substrate without use of bonding and/or modification layers. However, in some embodiments, one or more base layers of the coating reside between the substrate and the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer. A base layer can comprise one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table. A base layer, for example, can be selected from the group consisting of titanium nitride (TiN), titanium carbonitride (TiCN) and titanium oxycarbonitride (TiOCN). In some embodiments, a multilayer arrangement is present comprising TiN, TiCN and/or TiOCN. A base layer can have any thickness not inconsis-

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tent with the objectives of the present invention. In some embodiments, a base layer has a thickness of 0.2-12 μm or 0.5-5 μm .

Additionally, a coating described herein can further comprise one or more outer layers over the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer. An outer layer, in some embodiments, comprises one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements selected from the group consisting of non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table. In some embodiments, one or more outer layers over the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer comprise a nitride, carbonitride, oxide or boride of one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table. For example, one or more outer layers are selected from the group consisting of titanium nitride, titanium carbonitride, titanium carbide, zirconium nitride, zirconium carbonitride, hafnium nitride, hafnium carbonitride and alumina and mixtures thereof. Outer layers of coatings described herein can have any thickness not inconsistent with the objectives of the present invention. An outer layer of a coating, in some embodiments, can have a thickness ranging from 0.5 μm to 5 μm .

In some embodiments, a CVD coating described herein can have an architecture selected from Table IV. Coating architectures provided in Table IV begin with the innermost layer adjacent to the substrate and continue to the outermost layer. Additionally, $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layers of the coating architectures listed in Table IV can demonstrate any of the compositional gradients described in this Section I.

TABLE IV

Coating Architectures CVD Coating Structure
TiN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiN-TiCN(MT)*-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiN-TiCN(HT)**-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiN-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiN-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiN-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiCN(MT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiCN(MT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiCN(MT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN
TiZrAl ₂ O ₃
TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN
TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN

*MT = Medium Temperature CVD

**HT = High Temperature CVD

Coatings of cutting tools described herein can be subjected to post-coat treatments. Coatings, for example, can be blasted with various wet and/or dry particle compositions. Post coat blasting can be administered in any desired manner. In some embodiments, post coat blasting comprises shot blasting or pressure blasting. Pressure blasting can be administered in a variety of forms including compressed air blasting, wet compressed air blasting, pressurized liquid blasting, wet blasting, pressurized liquid blasting and steam blasting. Wet blasting, for example, is accomplished using a slurry of inorganic and/or ceramic particles, such as alumina, and water. The alumina particle slurry can be pneumatically projected at a surface of the coated cutting tool body to impinge on the surface of the coating. The alumina particles can generally range in size between about 20 μm and about 100 μm .

Blasting parameters include pressure, angle of impingement, distance to the part surface and duration. In some embodiments, angle of impingement can range from about 45 degrees to about 90 degrees, i.e., the particles impinge the coating surface at an angle ranging from about 45 degrees to about 90 degrees. Suitable pressures can range from 30-55 pounds per square inch (psi) at a distance to the coated surface of 1-6 inches. Further, duration of the blasting can generally range from 1-10 seconds or longer. Blasting can be generally administered over the surface area of the coating or can be applied to select locations such as in a workpiece contact area of the cutting tool. A workpiece contact area can be a honed region of the cutting tool.

In other embodiments, a coating is subjected to a polishing post-coat treatment. Polishing can be administered with paste of appropriate diamond or ceramic grit size. Grit size of the paste, in some embodiments, ranges from 1 μm to 10 μm . In one embodiment, a 5-10 μm diamond grit paste is used to polish the coating. Further, grit paste can be applied to the CVD coating by any apparatus not inconsistent with the objectives of the present invention, such as brushes. In one embodiment, for example, a flat brush is used to apply grit paste to the CVD coating in a workpiece contact area of the cutting tool.

A coating described herein can be blasted or polished for a time period sufficient to achieve a desired surface roughness (R_a) and/or other parameters such as reducing residual tensile stress in the coating. In some embodiments, a coating subjected to post-coat treatment has a surface roughness (R_a) selected from Table V.

TABLE V

Post-Coat Surface Roughness (R_a) Polished Coating Surface Roughness (R_a)—nm
≤ 500
≤ 250
< 200
10-250
50-175
25-150

Coating surface roughness can be determined by optical profilometry using WYKO® NT-Series Optical Profilers commercially available from Veeco Instruments, Inc. of Plainview, N.Y.

Further, a post-coat treatment, in some embodiments, does not remove one or more outer layers of the coating. In some embodiments, for example, a post-coat treatment does not remove an outer layer of TiN and/or TiCN. Alternatively, a post-coat treatment can remove or partially remove one or more outer layers, such as TiN and/or TiCN.

Additionally, a coating described herein can demonstrate a critical load (L_c) up to about 90 N. L_c values for coatings described herein are determined according to ASTM C1624-05—Standard Test for Adhesion Strength by Quantitative Single Point Scratch Testing wherein a progressive loading of 10 N was used. In some embodiments, a coating described herein can exhibit an L_c of 60 to 90 N or 70 to 80 N.

II. Methods of Making Coated Cutting Tools

Methods of making coated cutting tools are also provided. A method of making a coated cutting tool described herein comprises providing a cutting tool substrate and depositing over a surface of the cutting tool substrate by CVD a coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$.

Turning now to specific steps, a method described herein comprises providing a substrate. A substrate can comprise any substrate recited in Section I hereinabove. In some embodiments, for example, a substrate is cemented carbide, such as cemented tungsten carbide, or PcBN as described in Section I. Moreover, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer deposited according to a method described herein can demonstrate any intra-layer compositional gradient described above. For example, the CVD deposited $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can have an intra-layer compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 and stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. In another embodiment, the CVD deposited $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can display a compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 . Such compositional gradients can also be reflected within individual grains of the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer.

In a method described herein, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can be deposited from a gas mixture comprising an aluminum source, oxygen source, titanium source and zirconium source. In some embodiments, a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer is deposited from a gas mixture comprising AlCl_3 , ZrCl_4 , TiCl_4 , H_2 and CO_2 . The gas mixture may also optionally comprise H_2S and/or HCl . General CVD deposition parameters for a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer of a coating described herein are provided in Table VI.

TABLE VI

CVD Parameters for $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer deposition			
Gas Mixture	Temperature (° C.)	Pressure (torr)	Duration (minutes)
H_2 , AlCl_3 , ZrCl_4 , TiCl_4 , CO_2 , H_2S^* , HCl^*	800-1500	30-100	10-600

*Optional

Inclusion of titanium and zirconium sources simultaneously in the gas mixture, in some embodiments, provides a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer demonstrating an intra-layer compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 and a stage composed of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$. As described in Section I herein, the Al_2O_3 stage and the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage can alternate throughout the polycrystalline layer.

In other embodiments, zirconium and titanium sources can be selectively introduced in the gas mixture in an alternating manner. A zirconium source, for example, can be present in the gas mixture for a predetermined time period followed by replacement with a titanium source in the gas mixture or vice-versa. In some embodiments, alternate introduction of zirconium and titanium into the gas mixture is repeated several times throughout the duration of the CVD deposition process. In other embodiments, alternate introduction of zirconium and titanium sources occurs only once in the CVD deposition process. Alternate introduction of titanium and

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zirconium sources in the gas mixture can produce an intra-layer compositional gradient including a stage composed of Al_2O_3 , a stage composed of ZrAl_2O_3 and a stage composed of TiAl_2O_3 . In some embodiments, alternate introduction of titanium and zirconium sources in the gas mixture can precede or follow simultaneous introduction of the titanium and zirconium sources to provide an intra-layer compositional gradient including Al_2O_3 stage, a ZrAl_2O_3 stage, a TiAl_2O_3 stage and a $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stage.

A polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer can be deposited directly on a surface of the cutting tool substrate without use of bonding and/or modification layers. However, in some embodiments, one or more base layers of the coating reside between the substrate and the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer. A base layer can comprise one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table. A base layer, for example, can be selected from the group consisting of titanium nitride (TiN), titanium carbonitride (TiCN) and titanium oxycarbonitride (TiOCN). In some embodiments, a multilayer arrangement is present comprising TiN, TiCN and/or TiOCN. General CVD deposition parameters for various base layers are provided in Table VII.

TABLE VII

CVD Parameters for base layer deposition				
Base Layer Composition	Gas Mixture	Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$.)	Pressure (torr)	Duration (minutes)
TiN	$\text{H}_2, \text{N}_2, \text{TiCl}_4$	800-900	60-300	20-60
TiCN(MT)	$\text{H}_2, \text{N}_2, \text{TiCl}_4, \text{CH}_3\text{CN}$	750-900	30-120	60-300
TiCN(HT)	$\text{H}_2, \text{N}_2, \text{TiCl}_4, \text{CH}_4$	900-1050	30-300	30-100
TiOCN	$\text{H}_2, \text{N}_2, \text{TiCl}_4, \text{CH}_4, \text{CO}$	900-1050	60-500	30-100

Additionally, methods described herein can further comprise depositing one or more outer layers over the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer. An outer layer, in some embodiments, comprises one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements selected from the group consisting of non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table. In one embodiment, for example, an outer layer of TiN and/or TiCN is deposited with reference to CVD parameters set forth in Table VII. Coatings deposited according to methods described herein can have an architecture provided in Table IV above.

Further, the deposited coatings can be subjected to post-coat treatment(s) such as post-coat blasting or polishing as described in Section I hereinabove. Post coat blasting, in some embodiments, can change moderate tensile stress of the coating to moderate compressive stress or increase compressive stress in the as-deposited coating.

These and other embodiments are further illustrated in the following non-limiting examples.

EXAMPLE 1

Coated Cutting Tool

A coated cutting tool described herein was produced by placing a cemented tungsten carbide (WC-Co) cutting insert substrate [ANSI standard geometry CNMG432RN] into an axial flow hot-wall CVD reactor. The cutting insert comprised

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about 6 wt. % cobalt binder with the balance WC grains of size 1 to 5 μm . A coating having an architecture provided in Table VIII was deposited on the cemented WC cutting insert according to the CVD process parameters provided in Tables VI and VII. TiCl_4 and ZrCl_4 were simultaneously present in the CVD gas mixture to provide a polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer having an intra-layer compositional gradient of Al_2O_3 stages alternating with $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ stages.

TABLE VIII

CVD Coating Architecture	
Substrate	CVD Coating Architecture
WC-Co	TiN*-TiCN(MT)-TiCN(HT)/TiOCN-TiZrAl ₂ O ₃ -TiN/TiCN

*Innermost layer adjacent to the substrate

The resulting multilayered coating comprising the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer was subjected to a post-coat treatment of wet blasting with alumina slurry and demonstrated the properties provided in Table IX.

TABLE IX

Properties of CVD Coating	
Coating Layers	Thickness (μm)
TiN	0.3-0.7
TiCN(MT)	8.5-9
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN	0.8-1.2
TiZrAl ₂ O ₃	6.8-7.2
TiN/TiCN	1.3-1.7

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional optical image of the coated cutting insert of this Example 1 demonstrating layers of the coating architecture.

EXAMPLE 2

Metal Cutting Testing

Coated cutting inserts (1-2) of Example 1 and Comparative coating inserts (3-6) were subjected to continuous turning testing of 1045 steel according to the parameters below. Comparative cutting inserts (3-6) displayed coating architectures and properties set forth in Tables X and XI. Comparative cutting inserts (3-6) employed a WC-Co substrate of substantially similar composition as Example 1 and an ANSI standard geometry CNMG432RN.

TABLE X

Comparative cutting inserts 3 and 4	
Coating Layers	Thickness (μm)
TiN*	0.5-0.9
TiCN(MT)	8.5-9
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN	0.8-1.2
ZrAl ₂ O ₃	7.9-8.3
TiN/TiCN	0.6-1.0

*Coating Layer adjacent to WC-Co Substrate

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TABLE XI

Comparative cutting inserts 5 and 6	
Coating Layers	Thickness (μm)
TiN*	0.3-0.7
TiCN(MT)	7.8-8.2
TiCN(HT)/TiOCN	0.8-1.2
$\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$	6.8-7.2
TiN/TiCN	1.3-1.7

*Coating Layer adjacent to WC-Co Substrate

Further, coated cutting inserts (1-2) of Example 1 and Comparative coated inserts (3-6) were post-coat treated according to Table XII.

TABLE XII

Post-coat treatment	
Cutting Insert	Post-coat treatment
1	Polish—5-10 μm diamond grit paste
2	Wet Blast—alumina particle slurry
3	Polish—5-10 μm diamond grit paste
4	Wet Blast—alumina particle slurry
5	None
6	None

Coated cutting inserts (1-2) of Example 1 and Comparative coating inserts (3-6) were subjected to continuous turning testing as follows:

Workpiece—1045 Steel

Speed—1000 sfm (304.8 m/min)

Feed Rate—0.012 ipr (0.3048 mm/min)

Depth of Cut—0.08 inch (0.08 mm)

Lead Angle: -5°

End of Life was registered by one or more failure modes of:

Uniform Wear (UW) of 0.012 inches

Max Wear (MW) of 0.012 inches

Nose Wear (NW) of 0.012 inches

Depth of Cut Notch Wear (DOCN) of 0.012 inches

Trailing Edge Wear (TW) of 0.012 inches

Two cutting inserts were tested for each coating architecture (1-6) providing repetition 1 and 2 data as well as mean cutting lifetime. The results of the continuous turning testing are provided in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

Continuous Turning Testing Results			
Cutting Insert	Repetition 1 Lifetime (minutes)	Repetition 2 Lifetime (minutes)	Mean Cutting Lifetime (minutes)
1	16.1	25	20.6
2	27.2	29.4	28.3
3	17.9	18.8	18.3
4	23.0	23.6	23.3
5	26.6	28.4	27.5
6	23.9	18.2	21.1

As provided in Table XIII, coated cutting tool 2 having the architecture of Example 1 demonstrated the best mean cutting lifetime. Further, coated cutting tools 1 and 2 having the architecture of Example 1 displayed enhanced resistance to micro-chipping, notably on the rake face, which contributed to longer tool lifetime.

Various embodiments of the invention have been described in fulfillment of the various objects of the invention. It should

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be recognized that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles of the present invention. Numerous modifications and adaptations thereof will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

The invention claimed is:

1. A coated cutting tool comprising:

a substrate; and

a coating adhered to the substrate, the coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ having an intra-layer compositional gradient formed by Al_2O_3 regions and $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ regions.

2. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the Al_2O_3 regions and $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ regions alternate throughout the polycrystalline layer.

3. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein an individual grain of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer displays the intra-layer compositional gradient including the Al_2O_3 regions and $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ regions.

4. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein at least one $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ region displays a compositional gradient formed by localization of titanium or zirconium in one or more portions of the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ region.

5. The coated cutting tool of claim 4, wherein zirconium is localized in a portion of the $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ region adjacent one or more grain boundaries.

6. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein titanium and zirconium are each present in the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer in an amount of 0.01-5 wt. %.

7. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the coating further comprises one or more base layers between the substrate and the polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$.

8. The coated cutting tool of claim 7, wherein a base layer comprises one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table.

9. The coated cutting tool of claim 7, wherein the one or more base layers are selected from the group consisting of TiN, TiCN and TiOCN.

10. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the coating further comprises one or more outer layers over the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer.

11. The coated cutting tool of claim 10, wherein an outer layer comprises one or more metallic elements selected from the group consisting of aluminum and metallic elements of Groups IVB, VB and VIB of the Periodic Table and one or more non-metallic elements of Groups IIIA, IVA, VA and VIA of the Periodic Table.

12. The coated cutting tool of claim 10, wherein the coating is post-coat blasted with ceramic or inorganic particles.

13. The coated cutting tool of claim 10, wherein the coating is polished.

14. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer is deposited by CVD.

15. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the substrate comprises cemented tungsten carbide or polycrystalline cubic boron nitride.

16. The coated cutting tool of claim 1, wherein the coating exhibits a critical load (L_c) of 60 to 90 N according to ASTM C1624-05—Standard Test for Adhesion by Quantitative Single Point Scratch Testing.

17. A coated cutting tool comprising:

a substrate; and

a coating adhered to the substrate, the coating comprising a polycrystalline layer of $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ having an intra-

layer compositional gradient formed by Al_2O_3 regions, ZrAl_2O_3 regions and TiAl_2O_3 regions.

18. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein the Al_2O_3 regions, ZrAl_2O_3 regions and TiAl_2O_3 regions alternate throughout the polycrystalline layer. 5

19. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein an individual grain of the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer displays the intra-layer compositional gradient including the Al_2O_3 regions, ZrAl_2O_3 regions and TiAl_2O_3 regions.

20. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein the polycrystalline $\text{TiZrAl}_2\text{O}_3$ layer is deposited by CVD. 10

21. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein the substrate comprises cemented tungsten carbide.

22. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein the substrate comprises polycrystalline cubic boron nitride. 15

23. The coated cutting tool of claim 17, wherein the coating exhibits a critical load (L_c) of 60 to 90 N according to ASTM C1624-05—Standard Test for Adhesion by Quantitative Single Point Scratch Testing.

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